

Bairden Park
Near Tunbridge
Kent.

122

1853

My dear Sir

A painful duty devolves upon me to inform you of the death of my dear honored Father, W. H. Ashurst. He died at my Brothers House about eight weeks since but illness and much occupation have prevented my writing to you earlier. His death was very sudden, and unexpected, although his strength had been failing since his return from America and the loss of my dear Mother was a shock from which he never entirely rallied. During the last few months he had lost his interest in life & life's business, & worn down by physical pain, and depression of spirits desired death earnestly. On the morning of the last day, he arose as usual for a few hours, and my Sisters finding him moderately easy, left him for an hour

or two, to fulfil an engagement - A short
time afterwards whilst leaning on his hand
at the table in pain, he turned suddenly to
his nurse sitting in the room, - and his
eye shining intensely brightly exclaimed
"All is over Woman" and sank gently to
the ground. He lived a few minutes longer
but without consciousness or apparent suffering.
His countenance after death assumed so
calm and happy an expression, with a look
^{such} of lofty vigour and tranquility that all who
saw him felt comforted and reverential.
It was an expression which had not been
seen for many years, but recognised by old
Friends who remembered him in the days
of his strength and energy on his face was
shadowed and saddened by his long &
severe sufferings.

And now Dear Sir, I scarcely know
how to express to you and to Mrs Garrison,
& to W. A. C. Wright (& indeed to all his
American Friends) the obligations that the
his children feel towards you who did
so much for him when prostrated by

illness in America. To visit your country
had long been his wish. He accomplish-
ed his desire when quite unequal to the
 exertion, but he always felt gratified to have
 seen America the "land of his love". The
 last time I saw him, he spoke of you &
 your Family, and playfully he has ex-
 pressed himself sometimes in speaking of
 the continued hospitalities almost heaped
 upon him. "As for Garrison he would if he
 had had his own way have killed me with
 kindness, but Mrs Garrison with her kindness
 would have brought me to life again. H. C
 Wright he said had nursed & attended
 & cheered him as "a woman would have
 done" and ^{see has} repeatedly he has said how
 gratified he should be to return in any
 way to your Friends some portion of the
 kindness which was shown to him by
 all in America. Will you bear us in
 mind dear Sir, and give us some op-
 portunity of so doing, and feel that
 in doing so, you will add yet another
 obligation to the many for which we
 are indebted to you & to America. And

will you mention this to all his American
Friends - Mr. Emerson, Miss Whithead & others
I fear to begin to name them, lest I should
omit any. Some months since some
children of Mrs L Mott were in London &
forwarded a letter to my dear Father - by
some mistake it did not reach his hands
until some few weeks had passed, & when we
hastened to their address, they had just left
London, so that the offer of our services was too
late. — I forward to you a copy of the "Rea-
-soner" in which is a notice of my Father
which I prefer to others that I have seen
in different Papers. My Father much
esteemed the Editor, for his earnest advoca-
cy of the truth as it appeared to him, in
spite of much suffering & some persecution.

My Brother is now very ill. & has
been so ever since my Fathers death, he
desires his respects with My sisters &
my own to all of my dear Fathers Friends
and with sentiments of esteem &
gratitude I remain dear Sir

Yours very truly
Matilda Ashworth Biggs

Dec^r 24th 1855